



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, November 19, 2010

For Information Contact:**Public Affairs**

(202) 514-6933

http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/dc/Press_Releases/index.html

Former Investigator/Tax Auditor of the D.C. Office of Tax & Revenue and Maryland Businessman Plead Guilty in a Scheme Involving Sales & Use Tax Exemptions

WASHINGTON - Shelly-Ann N. Wicker, 37, a former Investigator/Tax Auditor for the D.C. Office of Tax & Revenue (OTR), and John F. Craul Jr., 58, a Maryland businessman, pleaded guilty to federal charges today in a scheme involving the issuance of sales and use tax exemption certificates, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Wicker, now of Homestead, Florida, pleaded guilty to one count of receipt of a bribe by a public official. Craul, of Frederick, Md., the former president and owner of a tax consulting company called Metropolitan Business Associates, LLC, pleaded guilty to one count of misdemeanor supplementation of government salary. Both appeared today before the Honorable Judge Reggie B. Walton in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

The case involved certificates providing exemptions from certain D.C. taxes. During her plea, Wicker admitted that on or about August 31, 2006, Craul gave her \$500 to expedite the processing of Forms OTR-612 (Rev. 12/01) Certificates of Specific Exemption from D.C. Sales & Use Tax, which he filed on behalf of his business's clients. Wicker accepted the money from Craul and indeed expedited the processing of the certificates.

Then, on or about December 23, 2006, Craul telephoned Wicker and offered her \$1,500 if she would agree to expedite the processing of additional exemption certificates that he had submitted on behalf of other clients of his company. Wicker agreed. That same day, she met with Craul at the Office of Tax and Revenue's offices in Washington, D.C. Although Craul had promised her \$1,500, he only gave her \$1,300 to rush the application approval process.

All told, in exchange for the \$1,800 that Craul gave to Wicker, she expedited the processing of the exemption certificates and then provided him with at least 25 fraudulently issued certificates for use by his clients. Nineteen of the 25 certificates were for clients of Craul that

were not qualified to receive the exemptions. As a result of Wicker's conduct, the D.C. Government sustained loss of tax revenue of approximately \$106,232. As part of her plea, she agreed to pay \$106,232 in restitution.

During his plea, Craul admitted that on or about August 31, 2006, he wilfully paid Wicker \$500 of his own money, which was a source other than the Government of the District of Columbia, as contribution to and supplementation of Wicker's government salary, for her services in expediting the processing of the certificates that he filed on behalf of his clients.

Wicker faces a statutory maximum sentence of 15 years of imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000. Under the federal sentencing guidelines, she faces a likely sentencing range of 10 to 16 months in prison. Craul faces a statutory maximum sentence of one year imprisonment and a fine of \$100,000. Under the federal sentencing guidelines, he faces a likely sentence of up to six months. Both are scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Walton on February 17, 2011.

U.S. Attorney Machen praised the outstanding efforts of the Special Agents of the District of Columbia's Office of Inspector General. He also commended the efforts of Paralegal Specialists Diane Hayes and Legal Assistant Jamasee Lucas. Finally, he praised the work of Assistant U.S. Attorney Lionel André, who indicted the case and negotiated the plea.

10-326

###